



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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hear a lecture by Mr. T. G. Rooper, M.A., H.M.I., entitled "Individualism in Education." Instead of the lecturer, however, came a telegram announcing the breakdown of the train which was bringing him. In this unexpected predicament, Dr. Gilford kindly offered to introduce a discussion on the subject of "Luxuries of Diet for Young Children." This proved a great success, no fewer than fifteen members joined in the discussion, or asked questions, to which Dr. Gilford ably replied. The report and financial statement for the year ending Sept. 30th, 1899, were read at this meeting. The membership showed a slight decrease, owing to removals, but there was a balance in hand, which compared favourably with an adverse balance a year ago.—Mr. Rooper has kindly promised to come to Reading on Feb. 23rd. The programme for 1900 is now being arranged, and promises to be full of interest.

ST. JOHN'S WOOD.—On Dec. 8th, Dr. Schofield read a most helpful paper on the "Springs of Character." Justice could not possibly be done to the lecture in few words, but it is sincerely to be hoped that all members of the Union may have the privilege of hearing, or reading, a paper so full of thought and practical suggestion on so vital a subject. Mr. and Mrs. Husband very kindly offered hospitality, Mr. Husband acting as chairman.—Mr. White Wallis will lecture on "Ways of Impairing Eyesight," at the January meeting.

RICHMOND AND KEW.—The Branch opened its session in October, when Mrs. Clement Parsons lectured on the "Principles and Objects of the Parents' National Educational Union." Mrs. Franklin attended, and encouraged us by her presence and a very practical speech.—On Nov. 16th, we had a lecture to members and their children, illustrated by lantern slides on "Our Friends the Birds." The lecture was given by Mrs. Lemon (Hon. Secretary, Society for the Protection of Birds), and the beautiful coloured slides were lent by the Society. Our children were much interested.—On Dec. 9th, we hope to listen to Miss Fanny Johnson, on "How to make London interesting to Children."

WAKEFIELD AND DISTRICT.—A well-attended meeting of this Branch was held in the Technical and Art School, on Monday, Dec. 4th, when Mrs. Miall read a paper on "Our Boys."

WOODFORD AND WANSTEAD.—A most interesting and successful meeting was held on Nov. 17th, at the Iron Room, Glebelands, by the kindness of the President (Mrs. Ann Fowler), when a paper was read by Miss Johnson, B.A., of Richmond High School, on "The Future of Our Girls." Miss Johnson's paper was received with much interest and appreciation by those present. Her wide comprehensive view of the many branches of public work now open to "Our Girls" were such as to appeal to all parents and teachers. Mrs. Whitaker was in the chair, and opened the meeting with a few thoughtful remarks on the position of girls in the past and present.—The next lecture will be on Jan. 10th, by the Hon. the Rev. Canon Lyttleton, at Mrs. Eliot Howard's, Ardmore, Buckhurst Hill; subject, "Parents and Sons." It is hoped a holiday lecture will be arranged on "Birds." In March, Mrs. Dowson, L.R.C.P., has, in answer to many requests from members, kindly promised to give a lecture on "Punishment," date to be announced later.

THE PARENTS' REVIEW

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE
OF HOME-TRAINING AND CULTURE.

"Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life."

INSTRUCTION IN HISTORY & CITIZENSHIP.

BY PROFESSOR S. S. LAURIE,

University of Edinburgh.

(Continued from page 8.)

General Method.—Having defined our aim how are we to proceed? Can we not find some general rule of procedure which shall govern all school history from infancy to the age of 18—the age which marks the termination of secondary instruction? I think we can, if we consider the historical elements of which we have spoken and the form in which these first of all present themselves to us, viz., as annals furnishing material for true history. The general method is to claim the chronology and annalistic materials of history for the school up to 15 or 16.

Now as annals, history is a series of related events in time connected with certain communities of persons and particular localities, the even tenor of events being occasionally disturbed by outbursts of passion and emotion. That is to say, it presents itself to us as an epic made up of dramatic situations with interludes of lyrical raptures—all connected with persons and the aims or ideas which they represent. Or we might say, it is a prosaic epic every now and then passing into drama and accompanied by a lyrical chorus. History cannot be *reasoned* history to a boy; even at the age of 16 or 17 it is only very partially so; but it can always be an epic, a drama and a song. The *general* principle of procedure is thus revealed.

We must teach history to the young as an epic, a drama and a song. A certain number of dates connected with great crises of national history, or with great characters, must, of course, be known for the sake of the time-sequence, and certain prosaic facts must enter as connecting links of the epic, as the pupils increase in years. But the younger our pupils are the more must the epic and dramatic and lyric idea of history be kept in view, and the more indifferent must we remain to causal explanations. Thus, the history of the school will be full of humanity, and so be a humane study; thus will it connect itself with literature; thus will it stir ethical emotion; thus, in short, will it be the true matter of history; and when history, in the larger philosophic conception of it, comes within the range of the cultured adult mind, this epic view of it will contribute to a *true*-reasoned comprehension—a comprehension, that is to say, which will take full account of human character, feeling, and motive.

History taught in accordance with this method shows itself to be, above all other studies, a humane study, and to be rich in all those elements which go to the ethical culture of the young. All subjects when properly taught contribute, it is true, to this ethical culture, for even science can be humanized; but language (in its larger significance) and history contribute most of all, and these two play into each other's hands. Together they constitute, along with morality and religion, the humanistic in education and furnish the best instruments for the ethical growth of mind.

The general principle of procedure naturally suggests the true method of instruction in particular lessons. Let the period be the Scots' wars of independence. Round Wallace and Bruce this story chiefly gathers. The boy with the map before him must have conveyed to him a conception of the *conditions* physical, social, and political of the period, in so far as these are intelligible at the age which he has reached. The story should be then first of all *told* to him, and only thereafter read to him. He should finally read it himself. This is the epic: the dramatic and the lyrical enters by reading to him, or with him, all the national poetry and song that has gathered round the period. He then, as in every other subject, is invited to *express himself* in the construction of a narrative of the leading events.

So in the history of England, the periods of the French wars and the Spanish Armada, for example, are to be treated in like manner. The boy must strike his roots deep into the national soil, or he will never come to much. It matters nothing that the poetry you give contains much that is legendary. A national legend is a far truer element in the inner history of a people than a bald fact.

This, I conceive, is the true method of school history in general. The minor details of method will be suggested by the Rules of Method applicable to all subjects.

A few words regarding three of these rules of detail may be added by way of illustration:—

(1) We are met at the threshold by this principle, viz., new knowledge must rest on knowledge already acquired, if it is to be a living and intelligible growth. In other words, we must always begin from a child's own mind-centre, if we wish to extend his area of knowledge effectively. Consequently, if he is to learn intelligently about past men and events, he must have some knowledge of existing men and events. He must have seen and talked and read about things present to his own experience before he can have the imaginative material at his service for comprehending the past and remote. This he gradually acquires from his every-day contact with people and things, the general course of instruction in the school, and from the reading of simple fables, stories, and narratives in his text-books and the school library. His arithmetic, meanwhile, is teaching him to stretch his conception of time, and his geography to localize his own and other countries, and to become alive to the fact that he belongs to a distinct nationality. The only historical imaginative material which I would *directly* give before the age of ten complete is the learning by heart of national ballads.

(2) At ten complete I may begin history proper, and I am now confronted with the rule, "Turn everything to use." The "use" is determined by the end or purpose. I have already spoken of this, but I may say further:—

Geography we teach with a view to extensiveness of mind; arithmetic and geometry with a view to intensiveness of faculty; history, not merely with a view to lengthening the

brief span of man's life into the past, but as the basis of social ethics. Unless I stir a boy or girl through the emotions, I do not know how I am to get hold of them. We wish the boy as he grows into a youth to be so taught that the national life and character in so far as it is worthy of admiration, and the achievements of his forefathers, shall form part of himself, enter into his judgments on present affairs, and stimulate him to maintain and advance society by the memory of what has been done before he was born. It was as citizens of a particular nation, and by a high sense of the duties of citizenship, that our ancestors accomplished all that has made the present desirable as an advance on their own time. My object, then, is to lead the boy to consider himself as a continuation of the past, as handing on, during his lifetime of activity, a tradition of life and character, while aiming to make things better than he found them by keeping before him the highest ideal of the duties of a citizen, and recognizing above all the need of self-restraint and self-sacrifice in the interest of the commonwealth.

If this is not our aim, what is? Why do I not give him the chronology and annals of Peru instead of England and Scotland?

The detail of our procedure is sufficiently indicated; but I may say in further exposition:

Up to the eleventh year I confine myself to ballads and a few graphic stories of heroes. In the eleventh year the course of instruction may begin to be continuous. But history is always a story *to be told*, and the wandering minstrel of old is our model teacher. The childhood of history, I have said, is the history for children. Text-books are out of place. The tale has to be narrated by the teacher, just as the minstrels used to sing the deeds of heroes at the courts of princes. The teacher's mind must be full of matter, and he must cultivate dramatic and graphic narration. Preserve the human interest of the narrative and point the morals as you go without *impressing* them. Narrations should always be given in the presence of a map, and geographical references constantly made. Certain facts and dates should be put on the blackboard and copies made by the pupils.

From Twelfth to Fifteenth Year.—It is now chiefly that we begin teaching the time-sequence of events; within a narrow

period, of course, at first. Boys do not object to learn these by heart if the events themselves have been first narrated. A chronological sheet, containing not more than 20 of the principal dates in British history, should be hung up and committed to memory. In teaching the time-sequence, the gathering of great incidents round kings and emperors has been strenuously objected to. I do not concur with these objectors. It is quite natural, it seems to me, to consider events in their relation to the chief magistrate of the country for the time being, and it is an aid to memory. So also, the record of wars and battles has been denounced. But these interest boys, and, moreover, illustrate the great crises of national and world history. But while this extension of knowledge is necessary, history cannot be made interesting, even at this period, in any other way than that which I have explained; and if it is not made interesting, it is quite useless in the school. That is to say, it is of moral and intellectual value to a boy only in so far as it gathers round persons and dramatic situations, thereby enriching his ethical nature and furnishing food for his imagination. In the thirteenth year a text-book may be put into the pupil's hands *for the first time*; but it should be a historical reading-book, not a history.

I do not think that pupils should be questioned much in history, except with a view to the language of the text-book, when they have been introduced to one; but unquestionably no lesson is complete which does not include a conversation on the substance of what has been read. The ends of examination in *narrative*, except where words demand explanation, are always best attained by a familiar interchange of opinion, and by requiring the pupils to reproduce in their own words, first orally, and then on slate or paper, what they have read in their books or heard from their teacher.

The text-book, I repeat, should not be an epitome of history, but a historical reading-book.* Epitomes are merely arid tables of contents; we ask boys to "get them up," and are surprised that they should dislike the task! Chronological connections will be furnished by the teacher

* It is superfluous in these days to say that history should be taught in presence of maps, especially maps that emphasize physical characters, and that the master should sketch on the black-board the plans of battles.

orally, written on the black-board, and entered in the pupil's own note-book. Chronological charts (I have indicated) should be hung up, but these should avoid much detail. The best chart for my study is the worst possible for a school. In history, as in all school subjects, eye-memory is too much ignored. The poets will be largely utilized, and if not read by the boys then read *to* them. Portraits of great men and pictures of great historical scenes or monuments will be shewn. Lantern slides might be effectively used. You may be sure of this that the young can be interested in history only in so far as it is (in the words of a French writer) "a *living* resurrection of the past." Human character, motive, passion, are the true attraction, and this is attained by (to use Carlyle's phrase) "giving a picture of the thing acted."

The earlier stages of history-teaching are thus, as will be seen, annalistic, epic, pictorial, ethical—and only in the later period didactic. Oral instruction by the teacher is chiefly relied on. To say that there is no training in such teaching of history is absurd. That there is little *discipline* as compared with that given by formal studies is true. But training, though not discipline, is often something much better.

From Fifteenth to Eighteenth Year.—During this period of secondary instruction the pupil may begin his history over again, as a reasoned or rational history, in some such book as Green's *Short History of England* or Hume Brown's *History of Scotland*. In the course of these years he will be much exercised in writing historical narratives. Every advantage will, meanwhile, continue to be taken of the general literature of the country, the master reading prose and poetical pieces to the pupils, constantly substituting such readings for the ordinary lesson. When speaking of the Wars of the Roses, he would stop and read Shakespeare's plays, one or more. In the dramas of Tennyson and Sir Henry Taylor, and, perhaps, also Browning and others, we find admirable aids to a vital reproduction of the past. Historical novels, if good, such as Sir Walter Scott's, should be in the school library and freely given out. In the last year of his course, the pupil should read along with the master (not as lessons in the technical sense) a book on the "making of England." The occasional acting also of great historical events by the pupils would do much to give life

and meaning to the past. Books written on special periods, of which there are now many, and biographies such as those of Warwick, Wolsey, Clive, Nelson, Cromwell, should be in the school library, and the boys should be encouraged to read them. Few will do so, you say. I answer, this largely depends on how you have taught; and also, I would say, it is only a few that ever go beyond the "beggarly elements" of any subject; but these few are worth all the rest put together. Just as in Society; it is a few men, and, above all, a few women, that maintain the standard of culture and make life worth living.

Before the boys leave school, a course of *conversational* lectures should be given on the history of the world, with constant reference to a large wall map and a "Stream of Time." These conversational lectures will connect the civilization of the ancient with the modern world. Very general notions only will be conveyed, but the culture and impulse to know which are given by general notions are unquestionable. In fact, there is little of real value anywhere save general ideas.

It is at the advanced secondary stage alone that history can be taught as a *rational* sequence, also that the moral instruction suggested by almost every page can be *directly* and of *set purpose* enforced. At the earlier stages this moral teaching is very much taken for granted by the teacher—adverted to, but not prelected on. "It is the office of historical science," says Lord Acton, "to maintain morality as the sole impartial criticism of men and things, and the only one on which honest minds can be made to agree." Pictorial illustrations of distant countries and of their great works of art should be available in every school.

In classical schools the boys will of course obtain a fair knowledge of the histories of Greece and Rome. These histories should be short and full; that is to say, full in their treatment of a few things, and always free from details not essential to the comprehending of the general course of the story of these nations. Such books as Smith's school histories are models of what a school history ought not to be. (Read Smith's *England*, page 29, for example, which page I name at random.)

Towards the end of the secondary period, historical reading, such as the selection edited by Mr. Green, should be read, and literary and historical instruction in this way combined.

You will now, I hope, see that history contributes in a very direct way to the ethical purpose of the school, while contributing largely to the acquisition of English and to literary training generally.

Citizenship.—But this is not all: In the secondary stage, and to some extent even in the primary stage, history must be made to teach citizenship, and as much of the Constitution as may be thought necessary to the equipment of a citizen politician. Surely this is important in a democratic country.

Social and civil relations and the forms of our constitutional polity, including local or municipal organization, should be taught in all secondary schools; but only in its *general outlines*. We are not educating boys to be constitutional lawyers. The duty of subjects to the state ought to be impressed. But it is quite useless to do this in a formal and text-book way. *All that can be taught with effect must arise out of the history teaching from day to day*, and be in close relation to it, and given orally. Such teachings, if incidental and associated with persons and events, take effect; if formal and detached, they are wholly ineffectual for their purpose. Their great value consists not in the knowledge they give, but in their effect in deepening the sense of national continuity and social unity and so preparing the young for patriotic citizenship.

The amount of instruction aimed at should be studiously restricted in its range: text-books of "civics" should be religiously avoided. But quite at the end of the secondary period, the pupil may be encouraged to write narratives of constitutional changes and to draw his own conclusions. Professor Seeley goes so far as to say that history has to do only with the "State." This is too narrow a view; although we may concede that the development of the State must be the central interest of the professed historian. By the "State," I presume, is meant the organization of the common life under law written or unwritten; and the story of it is how this came about. Such instruction, in any full and true sense,

is evidently the prerogative of the University; but in the later period of the secondary school, the pupils may be introduced to it in the form of familiar conversations on their historical reading in the way we have suggested.

For the masses who do not go to secondary schools, instruction in citizenship must be given in evening continuation schools, but not disjoined from general historical reading. If formal and technical, I repeat, it loses its effect. Even the adult mind learns best from the concrete. There is only one interest that is universal, and that is Life.

When we contemplate the close relationship that exists between history, geography, literature, civil relations and ethics, we see how one subject of study, properly taught, aids and confirms the acquisition of knowledge in other departments—indeed, cannot be taught according to sound method without doing so. It has been often urged against educational reformers, and with some truth, that they desire to teach too much during the school period. But the moment we begin to get a glimpse of method and of the organization and inter-relation of studies, we see that much may be taught with ease and simplicity, if only the teacher himself be properly equipped and understands the scope and purpose of his vocation. We may seem to demand much of him; but not more than the future will demand, if he is to be educator as well as instructor.

[NOTE.—As to examination papers in history, these should be confined in schools to dates and to the calling for the narrative reproduction of events. Although it is true that we have in the secondary school been gradually introducing the boy to reasoned history, he can absorb much more than he can give out. If you insist on his dealing with political causes he will simply get by rote what he has read or been told. To get dates by heart is in accordance with sound psychology; to get generalizations by heart is to flaunt the plainest teachings of psychology. Boys can understand reasonings and gather in this way materials for the future, but to expect them to reason is another matter.]